



NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

Fieldale Place/Portland Drive Neighborhood

Thursday, April 5, 2018
at City Hall, Room 011

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions

Erin Yancey, the Public Works Planning Manager, welcomed the neighborhood and introduced herself and others from Public Works and the Police Department. Approximately 14 people from the neighborhood attended the meeting.

II. Brief Overview of Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program / Discussion

Ms. Yancey briefly explained the history of the traffic calming program, the initial steps that the neighborhood has already taken, and the next steps should the neighborhood be enrolled in the program.

Prior to this meeting, a petition was circulated around the neighborhood to discuss enrolling in the program generally, and how each homeowner would feel about installing a cul-de-sac on Fieldale Place specifically. The petition showed a majority of homeowners were interested in both the program and the cul-de-sac. While specific treatments were beyond the scope of this meeting, the petition will be taken into account, and used in the petition phase of the program. Ms. Yancey also addressed the suggestion of the cul-de-sac, informing the group that this is one strategy among many that will be explored, and that any solution will need to be thoroughly vetted by other stakeholders, such as police, fire, and VDOT, as this neighborhood connects to the County.

When concerns were first brought to Public Works, the assumption was that the new housing development in the county that had a driveway opposite of Fieldale Place was the driving force behind the neighborhood's concerns. As part of the program, the Police Department placed their speed trailer on Fieldale Place for a week during JMU's winter break and for a week at the beginning of JMU's spring semester. The speed trailer showed an increase in daily traffic from 400 vehicles per day over winter break to 540 vehicles per day at the beginning of the semester. The speed trailer did not show a change in speed. The speed trailer can only collect traffic data in one direction. It is assumed that actual traffic on the road is roughly double what the speed trailer collected, when accounting for traffic in both directions.

Increased enforcement in the neighborhood found that drivers were frequently running both stop signs – one at Fieldale Pl and Springfield Dr and one at Springfield Dr and Portland Dr. When asked where the drivers were coming from and where they were going, to determine if they were part of the neighborhood or if they were cutting through, it was found that a portion were JMU students, a portion were workers at Sentara RMH, and the rest were typical citizens in the city and county.

III. Neighborhood Concerns Discussion

When asked about the top concerns, most of those present said that the stop sign running as described above was the biggest concern. Several anecdotes shared that people that live in the culs-de-sac on Portland Dr and Springfield Dr often slow down or stop at the stop-sign controlled intersections, despite not having a stop sign on their side, because so many other drivers frequently do not stop at the stop sign. There was also information shared about multiple pets that have been killed by speeding vehicles. The neighborhood is concerned about the safety of children in the neighborhood, and find it unacceptable that the unsafe traffic situation prevents them from walking to friends' houses in the neighborhood.

Another concern is an increase in cut-through traffic. This problem appears to have started about 4-5 years ago as Stone Spring Rd was completed and more development was built on Reservoir St. The use of GPS programs seems to have brought more drivers through the neighborhood, including heavy vehicles like tractor-trailers.

They also expressed concern about the high volume of noise from the increased traffic and speeding occurring in the neighborhood.

IV. Traffic Study

Ian Pike, the Transportation System Specialist with Public Works, explained the next step in the process, performing a traffic study in the neighborhood.

During this step, various data, such as speed, volume, and vehicle classification, would be collected to better inform if the neighborhood is eligible to enroll in the program and then what countermeasures would be appropriate to address their concerns.

V. Next Steps

Tom Hartman, Assistant Director with Public Works, stated that based on the information provided and the work already done by the neighborhood, Public Works could accelerate the timeline and start the traffic study before going to City Council. This would allow Public Works to collect data before JMU concluded for the summer. After the data collection, it will be determined if the neighborhood is eligible to enroll in the full program at which point Public Works will reach out and arrange another neighborhood meeting.

VI. Adjourn

For a copy of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Booklet, visit <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/neighborhood-traffic-calming-program>

Questions & Comments? Contact: Erin Yancey, Public Works Planning Manager, erin.yancey@harrisonburgva.gov or 540.434.5928